

# WORK OF THE AMERICAN SCULPTORS AND WEAVERS

## Artists in Plastic Medium Coming Into Their Own—Tapestry Next Subject for Public Interest—Paintings Gathered by Henri Rouart to Be Sold Next Month

THE American public has gradually learned within the last fifteen or twenty years to accept as possible interest and beauty sculpture that is not limited to portraiture and that is neither a mortuary monument nor a paperweight. This marks an advance that could scarcely have been foreseen in the dark days of the Rogers group, and it is quite cheering to come across evidences from time to time of the widening circle of American sculptors now at work upon what veterans of the Academy of Design used to speak of as "ideal subjects."

The term thus applied probably meant when it was first used that art of this sort was looked upon as wholly uncommercial and quite unprofitable. Shrewd manufacturers of monumental sculpture of the good old sort from aspect were wont to regard "ideal subjects" not done to order much in the way that literary hacks of today take the news that one of their number is writing a book which will bring him nothing instead of producing magazine articles for a sure but modest competence. It is magnificent, but it is not war, nor is it business unless one assume it to be a sort of glorified advertising.

But the day has come when positive appreciation may be the reward of sculpture reasonable enough in size to find a place in American drawing rooms or music rooms or having qualities that may win it place in a conservatory or a garden. The most convincing signs of the times came several years ago, when the doors of art dealers in this and other cities were opened hospitably to work of this character. Already it is a matter of course to come upon bronzes or marble figures as well as the more perishable plaster casts in the galleries along Fifth Avenue. Current art shows of the several societies also contain such things. The American sculptor is coming into his own and by every sign he is attaining a higher plane of idea and execution in what he puts forth.

This is exemplified in not a little of the work shown at the latest of New York's exhibitions of sculpture, comprising some twenty-five numbers, now to be seen at the galleries of the Goulian Company. About thirty artists have provided this story of work, and it has been brought together under the supervision of Frank Partridge.

There is a general impression of rhythmic movement in the show, rather than a preponderance of the sleek prettiness that once would have ruled. Even a heavy figure as Arthur Lee's "Alphrodite," which is almost substantial enough to please a Turk, has more than the conventional amount of personality—it looks forth with at least a glimmer of assertiveness, which would once have been thought unnecessary by the maker of such a subject; her mere bulk is but incidental and part of the sculptor's interpretation of his theme. Again, the same

artist, here a standing figure of Hercules, with his club, which depicts not only upon the sheer mass of its physique but seems to speak the general character and aspect of a personage at once gigantic and good natured, yet capable of ferocity. It might have passed, by the way, for one of the late Homer Davenport's monstrosities representing the Truists.

The sense of movement momentarily suspended is happily conveyed by the bent back and outstretched arms of the youth in C. C. Rumsey's "The Fountain." This gracefully composed figure meets readily the dual claims of naturalism and of the theme chosen for realization by the artist. The position of the youth, as he kneels on one knee, holding in his hand a shell to catch the flowing water, is one of easy strength; the onlooker will not feel cramped, any more than the model probably did when taking the pose. It betokens the work of a sculptor who knows the joy of physical vigor, who knows how to make the observer feel some of the elation that comes with the sight of abundant energy under due restraint. The figure is completely proportioned, and all of it is done with recognition of the sculptor's difficult problem, the designing of his work so that it will be expressive and beautiful from all sides.

An "Atlas," ingeniously contrived for use as a windvane in connection with an outdoor apparatus, is also contributed by Mr. Rumsey, together with a spirited "Solo Player," done with the authority that comes of personal experience in this sport on the part of the sculptor himself.

Studies of movement are again to be found in the lively "Dancing Fawn" and "Dancing Bacchante," by Robert I. Aitken, while there is whirling velocity in J. Scott Hartley's subject from "Hawatha," the wrestling of Shingobis with the North Wind. Here, by the way, the sculptor has failed to heed the requirements of composition; he has left the group virtually headless by wrapping the figures in their close struggle in an impenetrable tangle of rushing drapery and flying wind, without leaving free, so that it could be seen, the head of either.

Chester Beach is another artist seeking for movement in some of his small figures, while there are further and rather obvious examples of released energy in such themes as Charles Keck's "Laocoe Player," with his meshed stick swung aloft, and F. E. Elwell's "Tennis Player," whose poise is well maintained in spite of a want of reserve force in the girl's running figure with upraised racket.

A kneeling figure, designed like Mr. Rumsey's for a fountain, is the "Imogene"

has done three exceptionally well studied works yet managed to keep them from being either literal or didactic. There is interpretation as well as representation in his likeness in the bust of "A. C. C. plan," one of the well known old men models of the quarter. What we want from any artist who is an artist is not only the facts, but his opinion of the facts or at least his own reaction to their impact upon his perceptions. Art that is not in any sense editorial is no art, it is photography, and old fashioned photography at that.

This old man's head, for instance, tells us something about both the model and Mr. Salvatore. Its long, lean neck, its wavy hair, its open brow denote character; one would know how to approach the man, never having seen him, from this rendering of his peculiarities. And it is not difficult to guess from the realism of the sculptor to give free scope to these and other little facts that go to make up the portrait of a hopeful and good natured man that Mr. Salvatore is not without a good deal of sympathy with these traits.

There is closer analysis of character with a finer knit subject in the artist's marble bust portrait of an old and serious faced woman entitled "Ava." Here he has realized that little distinctions count at their utmost. The modelling of forehead and nose and mouth is done with a care that is loving and rather solemn. The mood of the subject is a true interpreter. He has responded to it, and so will he that looks upon the marble portrait.

For an accomplished piece of work which yet fails to attain genuine eloquence let the visitor seek out Victor D. Cronner's marble bust entitled "Womanhood." Done with an ease and sureness that carry the onlooker along and so modeled that there is a penumbra of light, a sort of envelope, surrounding the whole head, this almost persuades one as a piece of skilful handling. The translucency of the marble is taken advantage of to the full, and the same balanced effect of the work as a whole will not fail to be noted. But it is just a little bit tame, a thought wanting in fervor. Mr. Cronner, who devotes most of his time to work in relief for medals and the like, not forgetting his Lincoln pennies, is a welcome member of this group of workers in the round.

Another master of his material is Isidore Konti, who would gain by an infusion of vigorous expression, yet has achieved here, as often before, an effect of considerable beauty of a not too influential sort. His group of a youth and a young woman, "Dying Melodies," may be taken as typical of a talent that is real and likable, but wants a little more energy and thrust.

One of the agreeable portraits in the exhibition, to revert to this other phase once more, is that of Mr. C. H. Chavarr, done by Edmund T. Quinn, a pleasing, natural, well ordered piece of work. George T. Brewster has a sketch from life of Augustus Saint Gaudens, Albert Jaegers shows a portrait bust of Uncle Joe Cannon, surely more malevolent than even the most ardent Progressive



THE FOUNTAIN. BY C. C. RUMSEY.

It is not practicable to use machinery of the highly developed modern sort to make tapestries. There is very little about the process, in fact, that suggests latter day factory methods. To follow the pattern of a tapestry, as laid down in the drawn and painted cartoon, which the weaver has for his full sized model, the utmost freedom on the weaver's part to manipulate the threads is demanded.

In brief, the system of weaving tapestries, since medieval days, and probably long before that, has been simply as the foundation of the fabric simply the bare warp, consisting of the long-

in New York's history are in the main picturesque, some of them admirably chosen. In some cases too the figures are vigorous and eloquent, the grouping judicious and the general arrangement excellent. The colors are nearly always admirable; at any rate they are harmonious, owing to the depth and the soft resonance of tone afforded by the texture of the loose weft threads already spoken of. And the average accomplishment is astonishingly high for a craft so recently established here.

But, and this is said without any wish to minimize the beauty or interest of this highly successful series, it may be permitted to hope that as time goes on and the use of tapestries woven after designs made for definite wall spaces in fine American houses increases there will be experiments made by artists of the first rank in this practically new medium. It is safe to say that John La Farge would have been ready to try his hand at such delightful patterning as the cartoons for tapestries invites. While the finished product does not of course provide a wholly direct expression for the designing artist, while it robs him of his individuality of brush work, for example, yet it does reproduce enough of what is definitely his own to tempt the really adventurous painter, especially the mural decorator, to make the experiment.

And in any case there is in this newly transplanted industry ample scope for the talents of competent painters who do not happen to enjoy a large fund of creative originality, in carrying out the details of designs and in exercising taste and selection, which are quite apart from creating beauty out of one's own imagination.

It is a commonplace of the world of art dealers that it is growing impossible nowadays to buy any more of the pictures of the men of 1870, and of the best of Degas, Manet and a few others at any price anywhere. Yet pictures by these men do come upon the market now and again. And at rare intervals there is the dispersal of some great collection which sets free, for the space during which the auctioneer's hammer is poised in air, masterworks of the schools and men referred to.

Such an occasion is impending in Paris, where on December 16, 17 and 18 there will be sold at the Maizi-Joyant gallery the wonderful assemblage of paintings and drawings, most of them modern and nearly all of them French, gathered in the course of a long and happy life by the late Henri Rouart. The catalogue, in two bulky illustrated volumes, is issued in this country by Messrs. Durand-Ruel, whose house in Paris is of the board of Government experts in charge of the sale. It sets forth an almost incredible array of work by Delacroix, Corot, Millet, Daubigny, Courbet, Decamps, Manet, Monet, Degas, Pissarro, Cezanne, Gauguin, Renoir and who can say how many more?

The drawings are a revelation of the most distinguished moments of Corot, Daubigny and Millet, to name but three of this great coterie. They are the sort of thing a collector in the real sense seeks—not the conventional examples, not the routine accomplishments, for even the greatest men have had their hours of relaxed creative energy, but the experiments, the highly personal work, the drawings made and kept by the artists for their own pleasure, often not sold until after their death.

Thus Corot is seen here more often

in his figure paintings than in his landscape; Millet appears not only as the portray of peasant personages but as the limner of classic themes and of dramatic events. Degas is not only the painter of ballet girls but a man of all around interests. And so it goes through the lists of M. Rouart's remarkable collection.

Who was M. Rouart? He was a Frenchman who, studying artillery in the late '60s in the Government school at Metz, became interested soon after that in the possibilities of artificial refrigeration. He was an engineer capable of solving important problems, and after making a success in this large industry he turned his attention to the despatch of letters by pneumatic tubes and then to gas engines. All the time, however, he had a keen interest in art of the first rank.

He knew Millet and Degas was his schoolmate. He was an intimate of the far seeing founder of the house of Durand-Ruel and he bought freely of pictures and drawings that were in those days, from 1870 to 1890, termed horrors and dubs by M. Rouart's family and friends. In due time the appreciation of these pictures came to be general among M. Rouart's intimates and his collection



TAPESTRY BY THE HERTER LOOMS FOR THE NEW McALPIN HOTEL.

attained a celebrity commensurate with its extraordinary quality. And now it is to be dispersed. It is safe to say that nearly every American dealer of importance will be represented at this sale in one way or another. And

it is to be hoped that American dollars and taste will combine to bring many of these fine things to this side of the Atlantic. Why not to some of our museums?

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TAPESTRY FROM THE HISTORY OF NEW YORK SERIES.

of James E. Fraser. There is here, however, a franker spirit of decoration. The child that furnishes the motive is impersonal, there is charm without more than a slight definition of sight but the externals of the theme. In contrast Mr. Fraser has sent also a portrait bust of Mr. Roosevelt, embodying to a considerable degree the aggressive and dominating personality of the man, but without revealing him in any new or memorable aspect. Further examples of Mr. Fraser's art are small studies, one of them in bronze, for a mountain sheep, to be used as a letter seal.

One of the ambitious bronzes of the exhibition is a reclining figure of a woman by A. Stirling Calder; elements of strength are here, but they are not coordinated, the arms, raised to cover the face, seem to convey one note, while the torso, with its urgent points of emphasis, sounds quite another, and the impression is again disturbed by the accentuation of the limbs. If Mr. Calder had unified his effect so that the sentiment of any one of the three centres of interest had been able to prevail this might have proved an incisive piece of work. After all composition does count.

Mr. Calder is seen in happier vein in his "Head of a Laughing Boy"; it happens to be his own son, done with a freedom and confidence that command attention. He has also here a full length figure of an Indian brave standing with a robe held in front of him. Just a little too simple, it seems to the writer, after looking again at the long expanse of the not very interesting surface of the robe.

Victor D. Salvatore is a young sculptor of the colony off Washington Square who

would have it. By E. W. Deming, better known for his paintings of Indian subjects, are several small bronzes, one of them depicting a bear and her young cubs being capably modelled, with a happy adjustment of method to scale. Thomas Shields Clark has a very elaborate sundial, H. A. MacNeil a somewhat uneasy portrait of a lady, Mahonri Young a faun that has beauty, Charles Grafty two rather portentous figures, Eli Harvey (who had a show of his own work not long ago at the galleries of Theodore B. Starr), several animal studies and Sherry E. Fry a graceful youth with a mask.

At the time this review was written there was expected for this exhibition also a Lincoln by Daniel C. French, a cast from a sketch made for the large statue erected this year by Mr. French in Lincoln, Neb. The exhibition will remain through the end of this month.

The novel move of those responsible for the decoration of the new Hotel McAlpin in this city, soon to be opened, in providing for a "tapestry gallery," to contain twenty-six panels of tapestry, woven by the Herter Looms and dealing with scenes in the history of New York, has already been commented upon at some length in this newspaper. Of its importance as opening the way to a considerable development of weaving in this country the present writer is fully persuaded.

Tapestry weaving, by the nature of what is required in the finished product, will always remain a handicraft essentially artistic. This, at least, is the opinion of authorities who have studied the history of weaving from its earliest days.

tudinal threads only, stretched tightly between frames. Upon this is woven or darned the pattern, in threads crossing the warp at right angles, called the weft or the weft. The weft threads are left rather loose in some instances and drawn tight in others, depending upon the pattern and other conditions. In the weaving of ordinary fabrics the weft threads are as uniform as the warp, that is, they run all the way across the warp. And they are shot through the warp with a shuttle or in other mechanical manner, as can be readily understood.

But when there is a pattern to be traced it may easily be seen that it would be more troublesome to arrange the machinery or the throw of the shuttle in a different way for every weft thread than to put the thread through by hand. This is one of the natural limitations of any piece of mechanism—there must be repetition within a certain degree of uniformity or else production by purely mechanical means becomes unprofitable or impracticable.

Now this is a fortunate limitation so far as the artistic side of tapestry weaving is concerned. It has been the means of keeping the creative element of the art alive. It promises to employ the designing and executing faculties of a good number of artists and artisans in this country, if the industry grows, as it will, if the standard of the product to be turned out by American looms be steadily maintained. It should be made even higher than the examples thus far exhibited have shown; for good as these are they are not remarkable for the power or dignity of the designs as such. In the Hotel McAlpin series the scenes

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